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ABSTRACT

Mao Tse-Tung's view of education and society is based on the belief that the great masses of people are collectively rational. If the masses do not see what society as a whole objectively requires, however, the leaders must be patient and resort to education and explanation, or the requirements must be altered to meet the objections. By the mid 1960's a trend in China's education had developed to create a group of experts to lead China towards modernization. Maoists considered this trend as an attempt to reimpose an elitist society and sharpen, rather than diminish, class divisions. As a result, the cultural revolution brought sweeping reform to the Chinese educational system. These changes included more emphasis on rural and vocational education instead of narrow academic descriptives. Entrance requirements for higher education institutions were eliminated to increase the enrollment of students from less advantaged backgrounds. Tests and examinations were eliminated as a criterion for advancement in order to place more emphasis on learning and less on competition. In addition, all students and teachers were required to participate in manual labor to increase their socialist consciousness. (Author/DE)

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THE EFFECTS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION ON EDUCATIONAL POLICIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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This paper was presented to the Asian American Conference at the University of Massachusetts on December 6, 1974

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INTRODUCTION

"Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually, and physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture."

Mao Tse-tung

The educational theory and practice of a society is one of the best indicators of its values and future directions. For the past several years, the People's Republic of China has placed extraordinary emphasis on the transformation of their society. In this paper, I will discuss some of my impressions and views on the educational system in China based both on personal observations during my four-week visit there early in 1973 and on the writings of others.

The educational policies currently being employed in China are shaped by its historical and immediate conditions. China is a land of 800 million people. The task of implementing education universally at all age levels is enormous. Although 80% of the people live in rural areas, the rural areas are the poorest and culturally most backward.[1] In 1949, approximately 80% of the population was illiterate. Also, the class differences fostered by traditional Confucian ideology retarded progress towards the long term goal of China.

The long term goal of China is to realize an egalitarian society in which there is no more exploitation: a classless society in which the economic, social and political fruits of human endeavor are distributed on a

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[1]Much of the material in this paragraph is from the book A Short History of Chinese Communism by Franklin Houn. Ch. 9, P.199-206

basis of approximate equality.[2] The chief instrument for reaching this goal is education. Since the liberation in 1949, improving the status of workers, peasants and soldiers has been given top priority. The new system, then, was geared to both "production" and "unity of theory and practice".[3] The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was in part an effort to reform the new system.[4] These developments in China, of course, are part of the ongoing effort of the Chinese people to come to terms with the modern world without sacrificing their own identity.

Whether or not one supports China's goal or practice, I believe their effort should be taken seriously. And, if we do consider their effort seriously, we must keep her past and problems in mind and strive to gain a better understanding of the process of socialist transformation and how the theory underlying the process is modified in practice.

It is my hope that the Chinese experience will serve as a valuable tool for re-examining current educational practice in this country, for the innovations which have emerged from the Cultural Revolution directly challange conventional educational wisdom and test basic assumptions which long have been taken for granted.

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[2]Seybolt, Peter J. Revolutionary Education in China, NY: IAS Press, Inc. 1972. P.17.

[3]Frazer, Steward, "Chinese Education: Revolution and Development," Phi Delta Kappan, April 1972. P. 539.

[4]Yee, Albert H., "Schools and Progress in the People's Republic of China," Educational Research, July 1973, P.5.

IDEOLOGY, SOCIAL CHANGE, AND EDUCATION

China's stated objective is to attain an egalitarian society--a classless society without exploitation. The socialist ideal of equality differs from the liberal ideal of equal opportunity to reach the top. Its overall goal is a Marxist definition which involves not just a distribution of wealth, but also the economic, social, and political development of a whole nation in which all the people rise together and no one is left behind.[1] Socialism is not an end in itself, but simply a transitional stage between capitalism and communism--or more precisely in China's case, a transition between a "new democracy" and "communism".[2]

With the national liberation in 1949, education has been China's chief instrument for class revolution.[3] In this section, I would like to begin by reviewing some of the more important theoretical concepts that have served as the basis for Chinese revolutionary practice.

"Who are our enemies?"
"Who are our friends?"
-Mao Tse-tung

These questions have been asked by every revolutionary leader attempting to promote social change. The theoretical framework within which the initial

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[1]Much of the material in this paragraph is from Norman Chance's article: "China: Socialist Transformation and the Dialectical Process", Eastern Horizon, Hong Kong, Vol. XII, 1973. P.31-39.

[2]Robinson, Joan, The Cultural Revolution in China , Baltimore, Pelican, 1969.P.11-17.

[3]Frazer, Stewart, "Chinese Education: Revolution and Development",Phi Delta Kappan, April 1972. P.437-439.

answer is derived determines the priorities for action. Implicit in these statements is a third question: "Who are we?" For Mao, the "we" who engage in the struggle are not perceived as specific individuals but as a historical category. They can change at every historical stage of the revolution.[4] Today, the 'we' comprise all those people who commit themselves to "taking the socialist road" in the class struggle against the bourgeoisie.[5] Mao also sees society as divided into conflicting classes, constantly engaged in struggle against each other. He differentiated two fundamentally different kinds of contradictions: those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people themselves.[6]

Mao insists that the social and political institutions such as communes, schools, government organizations, etc. should not be viewed as rigid or unchanging but as highly mutable entities that can be divided into two. In attempting to deal with social conflicts between institutions and classes, Mao's contribution to revolutionary factor has been to seek out and clarify the key issues--the principle contradiction and its principle aspect--the resolution of which establishes a new order of priorities and provides a new focus of attention.[7]

This theoretical strategy is drawn from Marx's concept of dialectical materialism. In essence this theory states that all matter is in a continual

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[4]Chance, Norman, op. cit.

[5]Wheelwright, E.L., The Chinese Road to Socialism , N.Y. Monthly Review Press, 1970. P.212-215.

[6]Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol. II , Peking 1966.

[7]Much of the material is from Chai, Chu and Winberg, The Essential of Chinese Communism , N.Y. Pica Press 1970. Also see Mao Tse-tung, On Contradiction, "Selected Works", Peking 1966.

state of change. Reality is not the static entity but the dynamic process. At any given time the existance of any material entity is also in the process of becoming something else. Inherent in this "being and coming" or unity of opposites is a struggle involving negation or contradiction.[8]

In order to become conscious of contradictions as internal catalysts of change, human beings can no longer perceive themselves as "outside" the chain of events. They become part of change, perhaps leading eventually to qualitative transformation: while social existance determines the consciousness of humans, their work is part of the struggle to change themselves and reform the world around them.[9]

The relationship between socio-economic conditions and cultural ideology is particularly central to Mao's theory of social change. Mao has always emphasized that there is a "reaction of mental on material things of consciousness on social being, and of the superstructure on the economic base."[10] That is, human beings are unique in nature in having the capability to formulate rational concepts out of social practice, analyze the results, and then formulate new concepts derived from the new analysis.[11] To change the material conditions without understanding a corresponding change in the people's political consciousness is not providing a sufficient condition. And drawing on Marx, the Maoist asserts that material forces must be overcome by

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[8]See also Cornsworth, Maurice, Dialectical and Historical Materialism, N.Y. International Publisher, 1968; and Stalin, Jospeh Dialectical and Historical Materialism, N.Y.,International Publisher

[9]Chance, Norman, op. cit. See also Robinson, Joan, op. cit.

[10]Mao Tse-tung,"On Contradiction", Selected Works. Peking, 1966.

[11]Price, R.F., Education in Communist China", London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970. P.8-10.

material means. Spiritual forces must be overcome by spiritual means.[12]

Mao also regards human beings as a product of their social class, with his ideas and habits strongly determined by their origins. But at the same time he appeared to have an infinite belief in humans ability to rise above these limitations.[13] Time and again in Mao's writings, he returns to education, persuasion and ideological work as a means of eradicating errors. By contrast, the proletariate is always described as having a correct ideology, and that the people should learn from it and identify themselves with it.[14]

Mao's exhortation to goodness is always addressed in his writing. He constantly returns to the qualities of a revolutionary. The first is "a man's ability may be great or small, but if he has this spirit of selflessness, he is already noble minded and pure...a man who is of value to the people". "Serve the people, putting the needs of others before that of self." Two of the "Three Old Articles" have this as the main lesson.[15] He also talked about persistance working with all one's energy, patient hard work, modesty and the ability to learn from others,[16] and finally learning from the masses as well as teaching them.[17] Another of Mao's beliefs is that everyone needs periodical re-education because as circumstances change, people do not change with them, but need education to adapt their ideas to what is new.

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[12]Lin, Paul, his lecture in New York City, 1972.

[13]Schurman, Franz, Ideology and Organization in Communist China, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971. P.45-57.

[14]Chance, Norman, op. cit.

[15]Mao Tse-tung, Three Old Articles, Peking 1966.

[16]Price, R.F., op. cit.

[17]Mao Tse-tung, op. cit.

Mao Tse-tung's writings are full of comments on education. But he does not regard education as something to be confined within classroom walls, or practiced only for a limited time in a persons life. Its purpose should be to enable people to develop morally, intellectually, and physically, so they can become workers imbued with socialist consciousness.[18]

At the same time, education is also practical and social. Practice is the end to which knowledge is applied. Mao asserts that knowledge arrived in two stages. First is one in which the subject perceives the material work by means of his senses. Then follows a second stage in which the mind synthesizes the perceived data, makes judgements and inferences and formulates ideas which go beyond material reality.[19] Generally speaking, this conceptual stage is rational and subjective. It enables man to change the object world.[20] Mao goes to say that to observe and think is not enough. He does this through a third indispensable process: practice. Ideas must be tested by further practice. "Generally speaking, those that failed are incorrect."[21]

Education is social because it is in social practice that man will correct his ideas and make them truly his own. "Reading is learning, but applying is also learning, and the more important kind of learning"[22]. Moreover, everyone must be at the same time be a pupil and a teacher.

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[18]Mao Tse-tung, On Education , Kwangtung Educational Bureau, 1967. P.14-17

[19]Mao Tse-tung, "On Practice," Selected Works , Peking, 1968.

[20]Seybolt, Peter J., Revolutionary Education in China , N.Y. IAS Press, 1972. P.36-38.

[21]Mao Tse-tung, op. cit.

[22]Ibid.

A large part of Mao's comment on education refers to methods of study. He spoke at length about the uselessness of reading Marxist work endlessly and not relating what was read to the current problems. He also spoke of the need "to study conditions conscientiously and to proceed from objective reality and not from subjective wishes".[23] In order to learn from the past, errors were to be thoroughly examined; "the content of the errors and their social, historical and ideological roots".[24] Marxism for Mao Tse-tung is a method to be studied in order to learn how to solve problems.[25] "It is not just a matter of understanding the general laws derived by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin from their extensive study of real life and revolutionary practice, but of studying their standpoint and method in examining and solving problems." He continued by saying,"Those experienced in work must take up the study and must read seriously...only then will they be able to systematize and synthesize their experience and raise it to the level of theory, only then will they not mistake their partial experience for universal truth and not commit empiricist errors".[26] All this can be summed up in the often quoted phrase "without investigation there is no right to speak".[27]

Mao also talked about 'half intellectuals' who only had book learning.

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[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Price, R.F., op.cit.

[26]Mao Tse-tung, op. cit.

[27]Ibid.

They could be full intellectuals only by taking part in practical work.[28] Mao is in favor of student participation in the government of schools and colleges. "A school of a hundred people certainly cannot be run well if it does not have a leading group of several people, or a dozen or more, which is formed in accordance with actual circumstances... and it is composed of the most active, upright and alert of the teachers, the other staff and the students".[29]

Closely tied up with Mao's view of education and society is his political policy, described as "Mass line". This is based on his belief that the masses are collectively rational. The mass line is Mao's concept of democracy--"from the masses to the masses". That the movement toward socialist goal is possible only with voluntary participation of the great majority of people. Policy should begin with what people feel they need at the moment, and not from something thought up from above. If the masses do not see what society as a whole objectively requires, the leaders must be patient and resort to education and explanation, or it must be altered to meet the objections.[30] The mass line work style is an attempt to balance leadership and mass initiative. He sees the relationship between leader and led as a reciprocal process "the leaders learning from the masses what they want, what they think about events; then working out a policy based on these needs; returning to the masses to explain this policy and get it accepted; and finally testing the policy in action".[31]

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[28]Seybolt, Peter J., op. cit.

[29]Mao Tse-tung, op. cit.

[30]Much of the material from this paragraph is from Schusman, Franz, Ideology and Organization in Communist China, and Robinson, Joan, The Cultural Revolution in China

[31]Price, R.F., op. cit.

The cultural Revolution, a major effort to reassert the mass line style, has resulted in considerable changes in the educational system.

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES 1949-1966

> "In China, education has always been the exclusive preserve of the landlords, and the peasants have had no excess to it. But the landlords' culture is created by the peasants, for its sole source is the peasants' sweat and blood. In China 90% of the people have had no education, and of these the overwhelming majority are peasants."
>
> -Mao Tse-tung

After the Communist swept into power in 1949, the new government took over an educational system which had been trying for some fifty years to come to terms with the 20th century. Old traditions struggled with foreign idea, but both largely failed in the midst of political confusion and poverty of the country. A majority of the leading educators had been educated abroad and brought back with them the ideas of their host country. Thus the predominant aims of the system which the Communist inherited were those of the West: a selective system, aiming eventually to be universal, led by experts to train experts at the higher level.[1] Its characteristic was "liberal, academic and scholastic, and its products were in the main isolated from the life of the ordinary people, and had a deep dislike of getting their hands dirty".[2]

The Communists brought with them a different conception of education, its history dating back to the Red Armies in Yenan.[3] The aims were "limited, practical, and as closely related to ordinary life and the need of the moment

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[1]See also C.T. Hu's book on Chinese Education Under Communism, N.Y. Columbia University Press 1962 and Chiu-san Tsang's Society, School and Progress in China , N.Y. Pergamon Press, 1968.

[2]Price, R.F., "Education in Communist China , London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970.P.38-42.

[3]Snow, Edgar, Red Star Over China ', Grove Press, 1968, P.397.

as possible.[4]

On October 1951, a "mutitracked program"[5] was introduced. The immediate task was to educate the vast number of administrators and technical people required to run the country. Alongside this attempt to educate a new intelligentsia from the ranks of the workers and peasants, a movement was launched to re-educate the old intelligentsia. This was seen as necessary before any radical reforms could be made in the educational system.[6] Mao Tse-tung had stressed its significance: "Ideological reform-1st --the ideiological reform of intellectuals--is one of the important conditions for our country's all out complete democratic reform and gradual industralization."[7]

Consolidation, reconstruction, and reorganization were the main emphasis of the years 1949-1955. Attempts were also made to tackle illiteracy. So far the educational system was concerned only with an attempt to unify and co-ordinate the existing system of primary and secondary schools, and to increase the number of new schools.[8]

In 1958, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party issued a directive in which they stated that "education must fulfill its political role, must serve the cause of the proletariat, must be combined with productive labor, and finally it must be carried out under the leadership of the

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[4]Price, R.F., op. cit.

[5]Frazer, Stewart, "Chinese Education: Revolution and Development", Phi Delta Kappan, April 1972. P.436-438.

[6]Frazer, Stewart, 'Chinese Communist Education , N.Y.Johy Wiley, 1965. P.74.

[7]Mao Tse-tung, 'On Education , Kwangtung Educational Bureau, 1967. P.7.

[8]See also Franklin Hour's A short History of Chinese Communism , N.J. Prentice Hall, 1973. Ch9, P.196-203.

Party".[9] From that time onwards much more emphasis was placed on productive labor, both in part-work schools which began to develop, and also in the regular school system. The aims of education were spelled out in terms of "Training the new man with a Communist outlook".[10]

But the pattern of development was very uneven in certain respects. Educational provisions, especially at the post junior middle school level, remained unduly concentrated in the big cities, and the rural areas did not benefit nearly as much from expansion.

In the early 1960's, economic difficulties and a series of natural disasters forced China to pursue policies of consolidation rather than expansion. The emphasis was placed on quality rather than quantity. The system became more restrictive in enrollment. In many areas it became more difficult for the children of peasants and workers to receive an education.[11] There were other problems, including in many areas a growing "educated elite" who came into ideological conflict with the older and often less educated cadre "whose earlier sacrifices were not understood by a younger generation of would be technocrats".[12]

By the mid 1960's, the internal policy conflicts among China's leaders as to which was the correct road to socialist transformation reached a severe crisis. The "struggle between two lines," that is, whether one "puts

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[9]Hu, C.T., op. cit.

[10]Gardner, John, China's Educational Revolution, in Stuart R. Schram, ed. "Authority, Participation and Cultural change in China", London, Cambridge University Press, 1973. P.260-264.

[11]Frazer, Stewart, op. cit.

[12]Tsang, Chiu-san, op. cit.

politics in command or "technology in command," ultimately ensued. The general policy of those opposed to Mao was quite clear. Their main belief was in using institutions such as education to create a group of experts who would occupy the party and managerical positions and lead China (in theory) most rapidly towards modernization.[13] This elitest concept was unacceptable to the Maoists because it substains a "dominance-dependency relationship between elite and masses, sharpens class lines"[14]; in fact, the Maoists have accused the opposition of attempting to restore capitalism because of this differentiation of the ruling group from the masses of workers and peasants.[15]

Now comes the Cultural Revolution. It witnessed a major attack on the system prevailing up to 1966. "It signaled an ideological questioning of the national goals for education and criticism by those for whom the educational system was designed".[16]

The important question was whether there would be a continuation of the dual educational system: one kind to promote an intellectual elite and a different kind for the rural peasantry. Put dialectically: Does one seek education for revolution--to further the socialist transformation toward communism--or does one seek education for political power?

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[13]Wheelwright, E.L., 'The Chinese Road to Socialism", N.Y. Monthly Review Press, 1970.P.24-27.

[14]Seybolt, Peter J., Revolutionary Education in China", N.Y. IAS Press, 1972. P.10-15.

[15]Robinson, Joan, The Cultural Revolution in China', Baltimore Pelican, 1969. P.17-21.

[16]Frazer, Stewart, op. cit.

THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION

> "In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a most important task is to transform the old educational system and the old principles and methods of teaching. In this great cultural revolution, the phenomenon of our schools being dominated by bourgeois intellectuals must be completely changed.
>
> -Mao Tse-tung

One important result of the Cultural Revolution was the destruction of the old system and laying down the principles to be applied in reforming it. Although many rural schools continued to function throughout the Cultural Revolution[1], formal education virtually ceased in the urban areas. The Cultural Revolution also forced the dismissal of classes in mid 1966. The Red Guards, comprised mainly of older teenagers, carried out Mao's directive to overthrow old ideology, thoughts, habits, and customs. But these Red Guards were by no means united organizationally, their main contributions to revolutionary transformation was to attack established authority and provoke a re-examination of all existing institutions.[2] Mao's aim, clearly, was 2 fold: "to change the structure of power in society, and to carry out an irreversible transformation in the patterns of thought and behavior of the Chinese people".[3]

Mao's special concern with educational reform stems from his long held

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[1]Gardner, John, "China's Educationa Revolution," in Stuart R. Schram, ed. 'Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China , London: Cambridge University Press, 1973. P. 258-261.

[2]Hinton, William, Hundred Day War , N.Y. Monthly Review Press, 1973. P5-20.

[3]Schram, Stuart R., op. cit.

conviction that traditional education was the primary device by which the ruling class controlled China. He also believed that the educational system is the instrument for the abolition of the 'three major differences' between town and country, worker and peasant, and mental and manual labor.[4] In accordance with the above precepts, there has been an attempt to universalize education at least at the primary level. A policy of positive discrimination has been adopted to insure that "those who are most deprived get their share".[5]

The primary orientation of the new system is towards the rural area. Vocational rather than narrowly academic education is emphasized, and the reforms constitute an attempt to conduct modern, technically orientated education in a "society which remains non-mechanized".[6] This system also tries to be "proletarian" both by stressing ideological education to produce students who will serve the masses, and by giving the masses greater responsibilities in the management of the educational institutions. The Chinese educational system is also moving towards the institutionalization of "lifetime education" whereby people can be given additional training when ever they need it.[7]

One important aim of the Cultural Revolution was to insure that " the bureaucrat and the intellectual become proletarianized in the outlook"[8], which

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[4]Robinson, Joan, The Cultural Revolution in China', Baltimore Pelican, 1969. P.14-17.

[5]Gardner, John, op. cit.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Seybolt, Peter J., Revolutionary Education in China', N.Y.IAS Press, 1972. P.72-78.

[8]Chance, Norman, "China: Socialist Transformation and the Dialectical Process", Eastern Horizon, Hong Kong, Vol. XII, 1973. P.38.

in turn required that the remnants of bourgeois thinking be removed.

Under the development of the Cultural Revolution programs were revised to emphasize the reducing of specialization, the removal of bureaucracies, and the decentralization of economic, social, and political institutions. Since the Cultural Revolution in 1967, China has not possessed a Ministry of Education.

Criticism against the intellectuals focused on the question: Whose interests does education serve? If, as one of Mao's quotations suggested, "The major problem in education reform is the teachers," then they should become students again before they return to teaching.

With this effort the Cultural Revolution carried the issue beyond the class struggle; or more precisely,"carried the class struggle beyond the issue of socialism toward communism".[9]

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[9]Ibid.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

> "The period of schooling should be shortened. Courses should be fewer and better. The teaching material should be thoroughly transformed, in some cases begining with simplifying complicated material. While their main task is to study, students should also learn industrial work, farming, and military affairs, and take part in the struggles of the Cultural Revolution to criticize the bourgeoisie as these struggles occur."
>
> -Mao Tse-tung

The first sign of effective implementation of the post Cultural Revolution order in education came in September 1967 when Premier Chou En-lai ordered the students to return to school or face dismissal. In an atmosphere of hesitant but positive reconstruction, selected schools throughout the country began to implement Mao's broad guideline for educational reform.[1]

Before the Cultural Revolution, the elitists planned to build the modern, industrial sector of the economy as soon as possible and had a decisive effect on the school admissions policy. At the secondary school and college levels, students were chosen by entrance examination calculated to select the most qualified to acquire rapidly the skills needed by the society. During the Cultural Revolution, they were being criticized as the product of the dual educational system. "In short, the entrance examinations helped to perpetuate class privileges and sharpen class struggle".[2]

Since the schools reopened, the first evidence of progress came when a

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[1]Frazer, Stewart,"Chinese Education: Revolution and Development", Phi Delta Kappan, April 1972.P.489-493.

[2]"The Revolution in Colleges of Science and Engineering", Peking Review. Sept. 13, 1968.

secondary school in Kwangtung accepted its total enrollment without an entrance examination.[3] It is now the official policy to admit students from these groups who previously had little chance of progressing so far or, if they actually gained admission, were likely to do badly.[4] The traditional entrance examination has been abolished at all levels of schooling. Students are now chosen for admissions to higher level schools by the revolutionary committee of their factory, commune, or other place of work.[5] It is stressed that students should be selected from the ranks of poor and lower-middle peasants, workers, and soldiers. The students are also required to have a "history of actionism, manifested in studying and propagating Mao Tse-tung thought, participating in the revolutionary movements, and integrating with workers and peasants".[6] In general this means that they will have at least two or three years of working experience. Another major criterion is whether they are willing to return to the work unit which sent them and "serve their acquired knowledge".[7]

At present, policies are being applied to insure that higher education is more readily available to areas and groups which were previously somewhat deprived. Thus higher education institutions are enjoined to pay particular attention to more remote and mountainous areas and to national minorities.[8] More places are to

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[3] "Hung Chi", Peking, No. 6, 1971 (in Chinese). P.59-66.

[4] Seybolt, Peter J., Revolutionary Education in China', N.Y.,IAS Press, 1972. P.31-37.

[5] "Jen-Min Jim Pao", Peking, 16 March, 1972.

[6] "Hung Chi", Peking, No. 6, 1971. P.59-66.

[7] Seybolt, Peter J.,op. cit.

[8] Ta Kung Pao , Hong Kong, 2 July 1972.

be given to women, especially at "medical, normal, and literature and art colleges".[9]

Tests and examinations are still given as a means of assessing the effectiveness of teaching and learning. They are no longer being used as a major criterion for advancement.[10] The new educational directive insisting on combining learning and doing has resulted in replacing tests in many technological courses with actual job performance.[11] However, classroom tests are still given in subjects, such as languages in which practice and theory cannot be easily combined.[12] The tests have become a vehicle for cooperation in learning instead of fostering competition. In a typical examination, the students are given the questions ahead of time. They study together with faster learners helping the slower learners. Students then take the tests individually and then grade each others paper. Often the teacher will submit a paper also. After the grading, they will all study their mistakes together.[13] The objective of the examinations is to help everyone learn information and to assess the accomplishment of the class as a whole.[14] Each

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[9] Ta Kung Pao , Hong Kong, 17 June 1972.

[10] Chang, Tieh-Sung, "Admissions and Advances: Who Should Education Seve" People's Daily, Peking, Aug. 10, 1973.

[11] Tsinghua University Revolutionary Committee, "Enlivering Studies and Accentrating Students Initiative", Peking Review, Feb. 23, 1973.

[12] Chu, Yen, "The New Enrollment System and After", Peking Review, Sept. 28,73.

[13] "Interview with the Kwangtung Normal School", Hong Kong University Students, Hong Kong, Vol 6, 1973.

[14] "Education in China", Chinese University Collegian, Hong Kong, Vol. 5, 73.

individual is encouraged to exert maximum effort. But the achieving individual is expected to help others achieve also to the limit of their capacity, not to strive to outdo them simply for his own relative aggrandizement.[15]

The universities are also decentralizing according to the principle "To Serve the People". A number of the larger schools have established branches and centers in rural areas. A new type of "Worker and Peasant Colleges" is being run in conjunction with factories and communes. Its main goal is to train advanced level technicians from among its own force.[16] The major difference between this kind of technical school and the standard university is that the person is trained more specifically in terms of the needs of his or her unit.

Mao Tse-tung has once said that "question of education reform is mainly a question of teachers". The traditional attitude is that the teacher was the source of all wisdom, "whose smallest utterances, were to be parroted uncritically and the instance that students speak up is in large measure designed to do nothing more radical than produce the element of discussion one would find in Western schools".[17]

During the Cultural Revolution, teachers at all levels were attacked for their unwillingness or inability to implement "Maoist" policies. Furthermore, they had been required to accept "remoulding". Many of them have undergone criticism and manual labor. The general directive is that teachers must join

[15] Seybolt, Peter J., op. cit.

[16] The Revolution in Colleges of Science and Engineering, "Peking Review", Sept. 13, 1968.

[17] Gardner, John, China's Educational Revolution, "Authority Participation and Cultural Change in China", London, Cambridge University Press, 1973. P.271-273.

their students in learning from the masses. They must engage in productive labor and receive ideological instruction. They are also expected to accept criticism and suggestions from their students.[18] They are no longer the sole purveyors of knowledge. Teachers and students being equal as comrades: "students now expect a teacher to feel responsible that they succeed and to explain whatever they do not understand without blame".[19] The attack on professionalism during the Cultural Revolution included a rejection of the idea that only those trained in normal schools and higher educational institutes are qualified to teach. Full time professional teachers have now been joined by thousands of peasants, workers, officials and others from the Community. Some of them teach full time, some teach part time. Practical skills are being taught by workers and peasants beyond the school walls, in factories, in farms, as well as in classrooms.[20] Even history and social science are studied in the community. This makes education a concern of the whole community.

Another result of the recent education reforms is the massive increase of teaching personnel in the past few years. Some areas have claimed that as many as one-third of the teaching staffs in schools are recent recruits.[21] Under the general directions of the revolutionary committees, "normal colleges have embarked on a series of crash programs in the past few years".[22] When

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[18]Chu, Yen, op. cit.

[19]Yee, Albert H., Schools and Progress in the People's Republic of China, "Educational Research", July 1973.P.7.

[20]Seybolt, Peter J., op. cit.

[21]Gardner, John, op. cit.

[22]Ibid.

possible, under-qualified teachers leave their schools to undergo full training lasting between three to twelve months. Normal college instructors go to specific localities and put on short intensive courses during the busy farming season when the schools are on holiday.[23] A number of colleges also set up "May 7 Colleges[24]"--detaching a few instructors to establish small branch colleges which serve a group of commune or city districts. Also, because of the lack of trained staff in many localities, much use is made of correspondence course.

Experienced professional teachers are also asked to supervise the teachers in their locality. Teachers at the same level or the same subject are expected to "teach and learn from one another"[25]. Of course, such hastily trained teachers cannot be expected to meet the standards of the professionally trained. But the Chinese do not claim that such training is all that is to be required in the future.[26] The new teachers, especially the ones who were peasants and workers, are generally being used in courses related to production and politics, for which they may be better equipped than the old teachers.[27]

The Chinese schools also utilize the service of part time staff extensively. Sometimes, middle school students will do some teaching in primary

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[23] "Hong Kong University Students", op. cit.

[24] The "May 7 College", differs from the "May 7 Cadre School", May 7 Colleges are established like an extension center of a university. The two May 7 Colleges I visited were in Tungshan, Hopei and Nan-hai, Kwangtung

[25] "Ta kung Pao", op. cit.

[26] My interview with the Kwangtung Normal College's Revolutionary Committee in 1973.

[27] Gardner, John, op. cit.

schools. Work units may send personnel to schools for a few hours of teaching a week. Community people are most commonly brought in to teach political and vocational subjects.

Another one of the most significant changes in Chinese education is the shortening of school courses. It is claimed that this does not imply a lowering of standards, but merely the elimination of irrelevant material from the syllabus. Textbooks are all being rewritten to bring them up to date and adjust their political content. The rewriting of textbooks is a cooperative effort in which the system encourages the inculcation of knowledge of immediate applicability. A particularly interesting development has been the official encouragement given to those at the grassroot levels to produce teaching material relevant to local need.[28] In technical courses at higher levels, texts are being rewritten as part of the teaching and learning process.[29] The idea is to improve them and simplify the parts which "make mysteries of simple things[30]". In history, "class analyses have put the majority of the population into history for the first time as acting human beings and not just mindless objects in the hands of a few rulers and heros[31]". The liberal art students should "take the whole society as their factory[32]". Students and teachers have conducted social surveys in communities,

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[28]Ibid.

[29]Tsinghua University Revolutionary Committee, op. cit.

[30]Mao Tse-tung "On Education", Kwangtung Educational Bureau, 1967.P.10.

[31]"Ta Kung Pao", op. cit.

[32]Mao Tse-tung, op. cit.

identifying class struggles, learning from the people and teaching them revolutionary theory, and written survey reports and criticism articles. The reports are then read to the group surveyed and revised on the basis of their comments. Thus, the combining of sociological investigation with teaching and learning to write "constitutes a rather full course of study on contemporary society".[33]

The role of political education has been strengthened. The belief that education must produce specific attitudinal changes means that political materials are now used in virtually all courses. The examples of textbooks and materials that are being used have indicated that political point can be made in a way "which does not conflict with the objective need of a given subject".[34] By using such techniques those who had no experience in life before liberation are given an excellent appreciation of the old society. "But, political education is not designed merely to show how bad things were, it is intended to ensure that such conditions can never rise again."[35]

After the Cultural Revolution, the educational system in China is more decentralized than before. The actual management of the schools is no longer left to the professional educators alone. It was taken over by the "Revolutionary Committee". The revolutionary committees in education are also referred to as the "triple-alliance" because they represent different age levels--the young, middle aged and the old--and different interests in the community, different interests in the school, as well as the interests of the party. They were set

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[33]Seybolt, Peter J., op. cit.

[34]"Hong Kong University Students", op. cit.

[35]Gardner, John, op. cit.

up as a result of the Cultural Revolution in order to implement the new educational ideas. These committees are "responsible for teaching, studying and scientific research[36]". The main function of these committees is to gather information on teaching and studying, and holding meetings to discuss the reform of education. The goal for this new administrative order is to "move closer to the mass line ideal[37]"; that is to strike a better balance between central leadership and local mass initiative.

The most striking thing I found about the educational system in China was the approach to innovation and change. In China, I saw that considerable confidence was placed in the ability of the students to comment on innovations even if they did not specially help in generating them. There is little doubt that more changes will be made in the next several years. Educational principles and policies will be different from those of the industrially advanced countries because conditions differ and, moreover, because China's goal is different.

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[36]Seybolt, Peter J., op. cit.

[37]Ibid.

PERSONNAL OBSERVATION

During January 1973, I was part of a study tour visiting the People's Republic of China. Since my own particular field of study is education, I was especially interested in the various educational institutions that we visited as a group; such as the Nanking University, Peking University, Futan University and Tsinghua University. There has been much reporting of the educational reform and the philosophy of China's educational institutions, but little on how they have taken place. Being involved with education in American society, I was interested in finding out how the Chinese view the importance and the purpose of education, its role in society, and the nature of that society.

The following information is mainly based on two universities: Peking University in Peking and Futan University in Shangai because I was able to visit and have discussions on pure educational issues for the whole day separately from the main group.

The first university I visited was Peking University. I was also very fortunate to have an interview with Professor Chou Pei-yuan, who after the Cultural Revolution became the Vice-Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Peking University. Peking University (Pei Ta) is one of the most prestigious universities in China. After the Cultural Revolution, it has become a model for reform of the liberal arts colleges. The first class of freshmen was recruited in September 1970. At present, there are 17 departments--10 in liberal arts and 7 in sciences. The other university that I had visited was Futan University. It was established in 1905 by French missionaries. In 1963, it was also called the "Moscow University

of Thought". Before the Cultural Revolution, many of the students in Peking University and in Futan University came from specialized schools for children of elites or leading party members. With the Cultural Revolution, Chinese schools began to follow "a logical path toward relevance".

First and foremost in any university is the slogan that "Education must serve the people". It means that the teachers and students must come under the direction of the working class and the peasantry. The students themselves must not only be from the workers and the peasants, but must remain integrated with them. Before the Cultural Revolution, academic achievement was very important in obtaining entry into the university. Now, all students on leaving secondary school go to work in the fields or factories for two years or more. This ensures that the students understand the problems and are part of the people. Since the criteria for admissions are not purely academic, in consequence, I was told, students enter with a variety of backgrounds and abilities. At Futan University, the difference in background was seen as one of the major problems facing the institution. It was being addressed by establishing special classes in basic subjects such as mathematics and physics for students who were inadequately prepared.

At Peking University, a six month course was given to all students, regardless of background, before they began their main curriculum. These introductory courses included language, mathematics, physics and chemistry, politics and culture, and manual labor. Attitudes towards entrance examinations appeared to be changing. At Peking University, there was talk that a placement examination might be introduced soon. At Futan they were designing an examination by each department to test specific ablility for specific courses.

Despite all these differences, the main argument was that the change in

the teaching method, the direction towards integrating theory and practice and, hence, the reinforcement of theory, will eventually help to even out students. In addition it is felt that the use of students' initiative and the new morality of no competition or serving personal interest would diminish these problems.

At all institutions, the lecture system was hardly used. They teach by involvement, encouraging the students to discuss the subject. I sat in on an English lesson in Peking University and was very impressed with the ability of the students to correct each other without the teacher interferring. The teacher is in fact more of a coordinator than a teacher. In the mathematics department in Futan University, the material is first compiled by the teachers with the help of the Revolutionary Committee, and then given to the students. The students read the materials together with reference books and work together to solve the problems. Then the students would raise questions which the teacher would attempt to answer. After the group met, a student would give a summary of the subject.

The most important reform in engineering and science[1] is the practice of requiring students to work in factories and communes as part of their program of study. At Futan University, a workshop in integrated circuitry was studied by students and teachers while they worked in an electronic factory. In other institutions we visited we were also told of examples of such integration of theory and practice.

In the non-science departments--foreigh language, Chinese Literature, history, etc.--there are no factories. The general direction is set by Chairman Mao's statement that "We must take the whole society as our classroom". The students at Peking

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[1]For further information, please also refer to Strive to Build a Socialist University of Science and Engineering, Peking, Foreign Language Press, 1970.

University spent long periods working in factories and communes to ensure that their studies correspond to the needs of the people. The liberal arts students' aim is to understand Chinese society and history better by going to the countryside to study the historical aspects of the class struggle at a local commune. Other students give lectures on political thoughts to the commune members.

In the universities, a very striking phenomenon is the teacher-student ratio. At Peking University, there were 2000 administrative and teaching staff to help approximately 3600 students gain an education. Much of the teaching staff's time was spent in preparing textbooks. Most of the text-books are still on trial, and were not available from the bookstores.

School management is one area that has undergone considerable restructuring. At Peking University the Revolutionary Committee consisted of 23 members. Futan had 17 members on their Revolutionary Committee drawn from cadres, faculty staffs, and students. The structure of these committees does not appear to be fixed.

There are many methods of assessment in the university, mainly consisting of some form of examination. In Peking University, the examination's topic was pre-announced and only covered the major aspects of the course. Usually a student would mark his own paper and then would discuss it with the staff and other students. In Futan University, the teacher usually gives the student an open book examination with questions being given ahead of time. The purpose of these examinations are to test the students' ability to solve and analyze problems. In addition, other types of examinations are also used. The student was given 30 to 40 questions covering all the important topics two weeks beforehand. For the examination itself, the teacher would ask a student to answer a question orally. The group then discussed and criticized the answer. This was the most distinctive aspect of their assessment methods

and reinforced the point made about no competition.

At the end, I asked a teacher what would happen if a student failed. The teacher answered, "We do not blame a student if he fails--it is our responsibility, our aim is not to punish him, but to educate him to strive to build socialism in China".

CONCLUSION

It is still too early to assess the results of the recently implemented changes in China's educational system. Unquestionably many problems and uncertainties remain which would upset the current socio-economic synthesis and the mass line attack on elitism and class privilege.[1] Still, much remains to be learned about the Chinese educational system. Further research would do well to try to look more closely at the changes and find out how the revolution in education is being carried out.

Numerous problems will undoubtedly arise as China industrializes and her educational system becomes more complex. Mao Tse-tung, himself has stated that there will probably have to be several cultural revolutions before the socialist ideal is realized.

In the final analysis, Chinese educational theory and practice is bound to be stimulating for people interested in education or in social change, for it is the most radical approach to problems in the world today.[2]

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[1]For further information, refer to the article by Joseph Lelyveld: "The Great Leap Forward," in N.Y. Times Magazine on July 28, 1974.

Also see:
Chang, Tieh-Sung, "Admissions and Advances: Who Should Education Serve," People's Daily, Peking, Aug. 10, 1973.
"No Mark Can Do Justice to This Examination Paper," Peking Review, June 21, 1974.
Pai, Chi-hsian, "Integration with the Poor and the Lower Peasants," "Peking Review", July 26, 1974.

[2]See also: Yee, Albert H., "Schools and Progress in the People's Republic of China," Educational Research, July 1973.